

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Independent claim 1 has been preliminarily amended to clarify the presently claimed subject matter. In particular, claim 1 now clearly states that the second stop junction has a boundary that “defines an acute angle” (support at, for example, page 8, lines 16-21; page 9, lines 9-27; page 13, lines 4-6 and FIGs. 7-7C of the disclosure).

It is respectfully submitted that the amendments above are supported by the specification, claims, abstract of the disclosure, and drawings as originally filed, and that no new matter has been added.

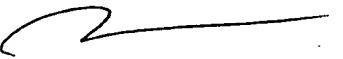
Applicant would like to draw the Examiner’s attention to two features of the “second stop junction” recited in amended claim 1. First, the second stop junction has a “second predetermined dimension in the second direction that is greater than the capillary dimension.” In other words, the second top junction is essentially wider than the capillary entering the second top junction. Second, the second stop junction “defines an acute angle that points toward the first region.” This acute angle serves to provide a second stop junction that can be beneficially designed with a readily controlled break through pressure (see, for example, page 7, lines 8-12 and page 9, lines 17-26 of the disclosure).

Naka et al., EP 803,288 (hereinafter “Naka et al.” and cited in the parent to the present application), as understood, teaches that a portion of a bypass channel (element 6a in FIGs. 3, 4 and 5A-5D of Naka et al.) extending from a branching point with a drawing channel (see col. 14, lines 49-55 of Naka et al) should have a **relatively small** diameter. In addition, Naka et al. appears to have no descriptions, teachings or suggestions related to stop junctions that form acute angles. Therefore, Applicant respectfully submits that the subject matter of claim 1 is distinguished over Naka et al. by at least the recitations of (i) a second stop junction that is of a “greater” dimension than the capillary and (ii) that defines an “acute angle.”

CONCLUSION

Applicant respectfully requests that, in light of the amendments and explanations above, the Examiner reconsider and withdraw his rejections. Applicant respectfully submits that the claims are in condition for allowance. In the event that minor claim amendments are necessary to meet formal requirements, Applicant invites the Examiner to telephone the undersigned at (408) 956-4790 so that issuance can be expedited.

Respectfully submitted,

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